MASKED

RISE OF THE ROCKET

LEHMAN / CRÉTY

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TITAN COMICS

MASKED: RISE OF THE ROCKET

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LEHMAN / CRÉTY

MASKED

RISE OF THE ROCKET

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MASKED

RISE OF THE ROCKET

THE ANOMALIES ARE TAKING OVER PARITROPOLIS!

Frank Braffort, ex-army and now henchman of the Prefect Beauregard, must make a decision; will he take on a mission he knows is deeply immoral?

But before he can decide one way or the other, he remembers that nothing is ever simple in Paritropolis, and the most monstrous anomaly yet has arrived!

A.J.? ME HERE. I SENT YOU A FILE THIS MORNING. YOU GET IT YET?

SO, THIS THING HAPPENED ON THE RUSSO-GEORGIAN BORDER OFF ROUTE 41, SO MILITARY INTELLIGENCE CALLED IT "INCIDENT 41." NOT EXACTLY THE IDEAS FACTORY DOWN THERE.

A PATROL, 1ST LIGHT INFANTRY REGIMENT. LEFT KHVANCHKARA JUNE 22 WITH DATED GEAR, TEN MINUTES OF AMMO, AND ZERO AIR SUPPORT.

BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR THE PEACEKEEPERS.

BLASPHEMY

HERE COMES THE SARGE AGAIN.

WE GOOD? CAN WE GO NOW?

NO.

VASSEUR! I NEED YOU OVER HERE.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

SOMETHING UNDERGROUND'S DESTROYING THE BIOMASS. WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT BEFORE WALKING ON IT.

SPILATNY

FRANCE

SERGEANT BRAFFORT WAS ONE OF TWO SURVIVORS. IGNORE WHAT THE FILE SAYS ABOUT HIM, A.J.

GUY WAS TEXTBOOK-PERFECT. HE GUESSED RIGHT ABOUT THE DEAD SNAILS. HE CALLED IT IN AND ASKED FOR REINFORCEMENTS.

BUT CAPTAIN SPILATNY WOULDN'T SEND THEIR ONLY CHOPPER; HE WAS TAKING IT TO TBILISI THAT AFTERNOON.

IF ANYONE FUCKED UP, IT WAS SPILATNY. BUT HE'S THE ONE WHO WROTE IT ALL UP LATER. HE LIBELED BRAFFORT TO COVER HIMSELF, SEE?

AS A RESULT, OUR BOYS WENT UP AGAINST A CYBERIAN 350 ALL BY THEIR LONESOME.

A COMBAT DRONE MADE TO BURROW AND LIE IN WAIT FOR MONTHS. THE RUSSIANS LET DOZENS LOOSE IN THE WILD AFTER THE CEASEFIRE, TO TERRORIZE GEORGIAN CIVILIANS.

IT WAS A MASSACRE, OF COURSE.

MEL!

NAIL THAT THING BEFORE IT BURROWS AGAIN!

OoBASPHEMY

THE OTHER SURVIVOR WAS MELISSA TALEB, GUNNER ON THE AFV. WHAT A GAL.

SHE'D BEEN IN AFGHANISTAN WITH BRAFFORT AND ONE OF THE OTHERS, DUROC. I THINK SHE AND BRAFFORT WERE AN ITEM.

106

-1053-

NOTICE HOW THEY TAGGED THE FRONT OF THE AFV? THAT WAS HIM. SOME BAUDELAIRE POEM HE LIKED.

LET ME SEE... I'VE GOT IT SOMEWHERE HERE...

"O BLASPHEMY! DREAD SHOCK!

OUR HOPES TO PIQUE,

THIS LOVELY BODY, PROMISING DELIGHT,

ENDS AT THE TOP IN A TWO-HEADED MONSTER."

"BUT NO! 'TIS BUT A MASK..."

ETC. YOU GET THE DRIFT.

F...

FRANK!

STAY STILL, MEL. LOOK DOWN.

THAT'S A C350 WITH A SHAPE RECOGNITION SYSTEM. IT SPOTS FACES AND MOVEMENT. WE MIGHT MAKE IT OUT ALIVE IF WE HOLD STILL.

I CAN'T. THE AFV'S BURNING. IF THE FLAMES HIT THE FUEL TANK--

UNDERSTOOD.

HERRERO? LATIF?

VASSEUR?

THEY'RE ALL DEAD.

LISTEN UP.

THAT FUCKER'S GONNA FLY OVER ME. I'M GONNA GET UP, RUN, ZIGZAG FOR FIVE SECONDS, DIVE INTO THE PILE OF BODIES, AND PLAY DEAD AGAIN.

YOU DO THE SAME ON YOUR SIDE, OK?

OK!

FRANK, NO--

MY... FACE!

RUN! ***RUN!*** THE AFV'S GONNA BLOW!

WHO-- WHO SHOT DOWN THE DRONE?

I DON'T KNOW! I SAW TWO RED BEAMS IN THE SKY, LIKE A LASER, BUT...

OH.

BRAFFORT AND TALEB HAVE REFUSED TO SAY HOW THEY DEFEATED THE DRONE. BETWEEN US, I THINK THAT'S WHY SPILATNY AND THE MPS WERE SUCH ASSHOLES ABOUT IT.

"INCIDENT 41." THE REAL STORY.

TALEB LEFT THE ARMY. WENT BACK TO FRANCE AND FUCKED UP. SHE'S LOCKED UP IN ST. DENIS NOW. KILLS ME, BUT WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR HER.

BRAFFORT DID A BIT BETTER FOR HIMSELF. THE PEACEKEEPER DOCS MANAGED TO SAVE HIS EYE.

BUT SPILATNY SCREWED HIM OVER SO HARD IN THE COURT MARTIAL THAT HE SPIRALED INTO DEPRESSION. HE TOOK FOUR MONTHS SICK LEAVE AND WOUND UP COMPLETELY THROWING IT IN. CATCH MY DRIFT, A.J.?

THE GUY'S AN IDEALIST. WENT TO SCHOOL. SIGNED UP BY CHOICE, RATHER THAN BECOMING SOME LEFTY ASSHOLE LIKE HIS STUDENT FRIENDS. NEVER TOOK SICK LEAVE IN SIX YEARS...

HE'S BACK IN PARIS NOW, BUT WITH THE MADHOUSE YOU AND YOUR BOSS HAVE MADE IT, HE'S GONNA THINK HE'S HALLUCINATING. I THINK YOU GUYS SHOULD MEET.

KEEP ME POSTED, OK? GOT A WAGER ON THAT KID.

SEE YA, PAL.

CLASSIFIED
MINISTRY OF
DEFENSE

INCIDENT
41

GREATER PARIS. DISTRICT ONE, XIII ARRONDISSEMENT.

23 DECEMBER, 8:30 AM.

RAPHAELLE! PLEASE TO HOLD DOOR. COMING DOWN.

PRET A PORTER

L'EXPRESS

THE GHOSTBOARDER

HOTEL

HELLO, MR. SONG. HOW ARE YOU? READY FOR CHRISTMAS?

YES! FAMILY COMING TOMORROW.

I'D LIKE THEM TO STAY, FOR ONCE. ESPECIALLY GRAND-CHILDREN. I WANT TO SHOW THEM CHINESE NEW YEAR.

OH, RIGHT. END OF JANUARY?

BUT WITH EVERYTHING GOING ON HERE, BETTER THEY NOT STAY.

LOOK WHAT I FOUND ON BALCONY.

WHOA!

PRETTY ANOMALY, EH? WASN'T THERE YESTERDAY. IT GREW OVERNIGHT, THEN DIED. NOW, DUMB TRINKET!

SO I'M TAKING IT DOWN TO THE APS, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF THEY'LL WANT IT. HEARD THEY JUST FOUND A HUGE ONE IN THE SEINE.

REALLY?

YOU YOUNG SCIENTIST, RAPHAELLE. YOU LAUGH. ME, I SAY: WHAT GOES ON IN THIS TOWN IS SHEER WITCHCRAFT!

I'M JUST A STUDENT.

HEY, BIG BRO!

HEY, RAPH.

YOU GOT UP EARLY!

GUY DEBORD

CHRISTMAS OVERTIME AT THE RESTAURANT.

PHEW! IT'S STUFFY IN HERE!

YEAH, I WAS COLD.

YOU TIDIED UP!

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.

CLÉO VILLANOVA PSYCHO-

OTHERWISE I'D BE MESSIER THAN YOU. IS IT OK?

IT'S NICE.

THE TWO OF US, SHARING TWO ROOMS... I'LL GET USED TO IT.

I WENT DOWN FOR A PAPER.

THIS IS CRAZY STUFF, ABOUT THE--

...RUSSIAN MINISTER HAS REPEATED THAT THE NEW BORDER WITH GEORGIA IS NON-NEGOTIABLE.

LE R

préfet BEAUREGARD

IN FRANCE, THE DAY'S TOP NEWS IS THE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT JOEL BEAUREGARD, SPECIAL PREFECT OF GREATER PARIS, IS HAVING THIS MORNING AT LA DEFENSE. TENSIONS ARE HIGH.

A FEW DAYS AWAY FROM RENEWING HIS TERM, BEAUREGARD MUST ADDRESS THE WAVE OF ANOMALIES UPSETTING THE CAPITAL.

RAPH! YOU DON'T HAVE A TV. WHERE'S THAT IMAGE COMING FROM?

OH, IT'S THE LIGHTNING NETWORK. PIRATE MEDIA. IT'S BEEN ALL OVER PARIS FOR TWO YEARS NOW. NO ONE KNOWS WHO STARTED IT.

BEAUREGARD WILL ALSO BE ADDRESSING THE GIANT HOLOGRAM PROJECTED 24:7 ABOVE MONTMARTRE.

THESE GUYS CAN TRANSMIT ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, NO RECEIVER NECESSARY. THEY'VE GOT A LOT OF SPYCAMS. IT'S A CULT THING.

THIS TRIBUTE TO FANTOMA, ONE OF THE MOST SAVAGE 20TH CENTURY FRENCH SERIAL KILLERS, HAS ENRAGED THE CITY COUNCIL.

HOW DO YOU TURN IT OFF?

YOU CAN'T. YOU JUST WAIT FOR IT TO STOP. AT THREE AM, IT'S NOT AS COOL.

... HEAR THIS STATEMENT FROM DISTRICT ONE MAYOR, MICHELLE CAPRICE.

MAIRIE DE PARIS

AS USUAL, PREFECT BEAUREGARD IS ABUSING THE EXPANSIVE POWERS THE PRESIDENT HAS GRANTED HIM OVER THE CITY.

SHIT!

GLORIFYING A MASKED CRIMINAL WHO WAS NEVER ARRESTED IS IN CONTEMPT OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES.

IT JUST SLIPPED FROM MY HAND.

MY INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE WILL COME TO A DECISION ON THIS LATEST SCANDAL SHORTLY.

RIING

OH, AND I BROKE A GLASS CLEANING UP JUST NOW. I'M SO CLUMSY.

DON'T WORRY, FRANK.

YOU'RE DOING REALLY WELL.

THANK YOU, MADAME MAYOR.

NEXT UP ON THE LIGHTNING NETWORK: AFTER 1,300 DAYS, RUNNER MONA BAKE FROM CRETEIL IS ABOUT TO FINISH WALKING AROUND THE WORLD ON FOOT!

ARE YOU RAPHAELLE BRAFFORT?

ROCKET!?

WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE POET SERGEANT HIMSELF!

WHERE'D YOU GET THAT SCAR, IN A DUEL? STYLISH!

EX-SERGEANT. HEY, VICTOR.

RAPHAELLE, THIS IS VICTOR "ROCKET" DUROC. WE SERVED IN AFGHANISTAN TOGETHER THREE YEARS AGO. HE WAS SMART ENOUGH TO STOP THERE.

"ROCKET"? COOL NICKNAME!

IT'S 'CAUSE OF THIS THING I DO WITH THE GIRLS. WANNA SEE?

YEAH... NO.

I JUST GOT BACK YESTERDAY. HOW'D YOU KNOW I'D BE HERE?

GET DRESSED. I'LL EXPLAIN EN ROUTE.

WE GOING SOMEWHERE?

UNLESS YOU LIKE CLEANING UP?

HAVE FUN WITH YOUR DOUCHEBAG FRIEND.

OH YEAH, MY BOYFRIEND'S SUPPOSED TO STOP BY THIS AFTERNOON.

OK. I'LL TAKE MY TIME. GOT A DATE LATER ANYWAY.

WE'LL TALK NEW YEAR'S TONIGHT.

SEE YA AROUND, HOTTIE!

YOUR SISTER'S A BEAUT!

YOU WANT A FIST IN THE FACE?

HA HA! UPTIGHT AS EVER.

I'M PARKED OUT FRONT.

THAT'S YOUR CAR?

COMPANY CAR. I WORK FOR THE CITY. WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO GET THESE.

AND IT'S NOT A CAR. IT'S A RENAULT AERODYNE SPECIALLY MADE FOR--

HOLD UP, VICTOR.

I'VE BEEN AWAY FOR SIX YEARS NOW.

I READ THE PAPER. I WATCH TV. BUT THOSE WORDS ARE MEANINGLESS TO ME...

TOOROP IS ALIVE

WHAT HAPPENED TO PARIS?

WELL, IT'S 8:58.

ASK YOUR QUESTIONS, IF YOU HAVE TO.

SIR, THERE'S A DEMONSTRATION GOING ON OUT FRONT RIGHT NOW BETWEEN YOUR FANS AND YOUR DETRACTORS.

UBU MAGAZINE

MY QUESTION IS SIMPLE: DO YOU FIND IT NORMAL FOR A PREFECT TO HAVE FANS?

HA HA HA!

GREAT QUESTION! I DON'T KNOW. I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.

YES -- IN THE SECOND ROW?

TAXI PARISIEN

35411

YESTERDAY, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCED PLANS TO CREATE A RESEARCH CENTER ON THE ANOMALIES HERE. YOUR THOUGHTS?

WHAT TOOK THEM SO LONG?

WHEN THE ANOMALIES WERE JUST GRAFFITI AND SELF-REPLICATING MACHINES, THEY WERE ONLY AN URBAN LEGEND. BUT NOW THERE ARE... UH... CREATURES.

LIVRES

AND THE GHOSTBOARDER!

WE'RE ALWAYS DELIGHTED WHEN OUR AMERICAN FRIENDS VISIT. NEXT QUESTION?

PALA

VICTOR! YOU'RE FLYING TOO LOW!

NAH, IT'S FUN! SEE?

WE'RE IN NEUILLY ALREADY.

APS

POLICE APS

POLICE

THOSE GUYS WITH THEIR FLYING CARS!

THINK THEY OWN THE AIR.

POLICE

GREATER PARIS PREFECTURE, DISTRICT FIVE.

?!!

AMAZING!

TOLD YA SO.

I FIND MAYOR CAPRICE'S REACTION VERY CONVENTIONAL. FANTOMA'S BEEN AN ICON FOR A LONG TIME NOW. HE'S WIDELY KNOWN...

SLACKERS!

FASCISTS!

SHITE!

POLICE

THE PRESIDENT HAS TASKED ME WITH MAKING PARIS A WORLD CAPITAL. THAT'S GOOD PRESS.

AS FOR ANY POSSIBLE RISKS, THE PREFECTURE IS ON TOP OF THE SITUATION.

THANKS, DUROC. JOIN THE CROWD IN THE PRESS ROOM. LIKE IT'S NOT PACKED ENOUGH.

CALL ME SOMETIME, BRAFFORT!

HELLO.

VICTOR TELL YOU WHO I AM?

COLONEL ALAIN-JEAN ASSAN. FORMERLY OF DAGUET DIVISION DURING THE FIRST GULF WAR. FORMER FRENCH NATO ATTACHÉ AT THE PENTAGON. I'D HAVE RECOGNIZED YOU, ANYWAY.

THAT'S ALL HISTORY.

RIGHT NOW I'M THAT MAN'S HEAD OF SECURITY.

LOOKS FUN.

IT'S MOSTLY... COLORFUL. BUT SOME DAYS IT IS FUN, SURE.

I WANTED TO MEET YOU. A FEW OLD FRIENDS AT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE PASSED ME YOUR FILE.

IS THAT LEGAL?

I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN THE ARMY TREATS ITS MEN LIKE SHIT.

YOU GOT A PLACE TO LIVE? MONEY?

TAXI PARIS

I'M AT MY SISTER'S. SHE'S A STUDENT, WORKS PART-TIME AT A RESTAURANT. I'VE GOT MY BACK PAY. IT WORKS FOR NOW.

AND YOUR PARENTS?

OLD GLOBAL JUSTICE ACTIVISTS.

LAST I HEARD, THEY WERE FOUNDING SCHOOLS IN THE BUSH OUT IN MOZAMBIQUE.

YOU NEVER TOLD THEM YOU QUIT THE ARMY? THAT YOU WERE WOUNDED?

I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.

POSTE 1

POSTE 2

POSTE 3

SO, WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?

BARELY STARTED MAKING ANY YET...

PRESS CONFERENCE

PARIS IS STILL A STRONGLY REVOLUTIONARY CITY.

FIRST ROW, LADY IN THE VEIL.

TAA-DEE-RA-STOE-RA.

PRESSE

THAT'S THE BEST QUESTION ANYONE'S ASKED ALL DAY!

COULD YOU REPEAT IT, PLEASE?

SIH-LUA-STEBA-KA-REEE-TREE-ANH.

MAAT-KA-REE-DEE-TAA...

TA-DEE-REE!

SHIT!

SECURITY! THE PREFECT'S UNDER ATTACK IN THE PRESS HALL! SHUT THE EXITS!

CON
PRES

MISTER, YOU'RE--

IT'S NOT AN ATTACK!

IT'S AN ANOMALY DISGUISED AS A WOMAN!

WHOA!

YOU WATCHING LIGHTNING NOW?

REE-DEEK-TREE-OODA...

HAAAA!

OOGO-REE-DEE-REK!

SHUT UP!

BLAM

BLAM

IT'S ALL GOOD, BRAFFORT.

SHE WON'T BE TALKING ANYMORE.

ELSEWHERE.

YES.

REST ASSURED: IT'S UNPRECEDENTED.

Attachment: Chart

ARE YOU BACK IN YOUR OFFICE? I'M SENDING YOU THE FIGURES. LOOK AT WHEN THEY FLY OFF THE CHARTS, COMPARED WITH THE VIDEO SURVEILLANCE TAPES.

YOU'LL SEE.

YES, TOM. IT'S BEEN A REAL SHOCKER BUT IT SEEMS TO BE OVER NOW. THE FRENCH POLICE HAVE JUST ARRIVED AND...

THE NATURE OF THE ENTITY THAT MANAGED TO INFILTRATE THE PRESS ROOM IS STILL A MYSTERY, BUT IT'S CLEAR THE SECURITY SERVICES WILL HAVE TO EXPLAIN...

THE AFTERMATH IN JUST A FEW MOMENTS! STAY TUNED TO THE LIGHTNING NETWORK!

FRANK.

WITH ME.

POLI
FIRST NAME BASIS NOW?
SHH. SEE THAT GUY?
B.P.A
REINES
APS
THE BEARDED ONE. HE'S COMMISSIONER REINES. HEADS THE APS.
FRIENDS WITH MAYOR CAPRICE. VERY HOSTILE TOWARD THE PREFECT. I DON'T WANT HIM SINKING HIS FANGS INTO THIS.
HOW'S THAT MY BUSINESS? THE AP-WHAT?
ANOMALOUS PHENOMENA SQUAD.
BEEP BEEP
YOUR PHONE'S RINGING.
MY SISTER.
FRANK!
I SAW YOU ON LIGHTNING. I WAS SO SCARED! YOU OK? ARE YOU STILL AT THE PREFECTURE?
YEAH, I'M FINE. NO BIG DEAL, JUST A LITTLE SCUFFLE.
ISOU
DON'T WORRY. I'LL CALL YOU BACK SOON.
SHE'S WATCHING OVER YOU. THAT'S NICE.
I'D RATHER IT WAS THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
COLONEL, ABOUT THAT... THING...
AN ANOMALY. SCATTERED PHENOMENA ACROSS PARIS FOR THREE YEARS NOW, BUT THAT'S THE FIRST TIME ANY HAVE TRIED TO KILL SOMEONE.
PREFECT WANTS TO SEE YOU.

AH. BRAFFORT.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'RE ON EVERY NEWS CHANNEL. YOU HAVE A REAL FLAIR FOR THE DRAMATIC.

ASSAN TELL YOU ABOUT THE JOB?

NOT YET.

WHAT JOB?

EVERYONE OUT.

I KNEW EVEN BEFORE THE INCIDENT DOWNSTAIRS, BUT NOW IT'S URGENT. YOU'RE FROM THE SAME SERVICE AS OUR EXCELLENT MR. DUROC?

YEAH, BUT--

THEN IT'S SETTLED. ASSAN SAID YOU WERE HAVING PROBLEMS. IF YOU NEED AN ADVANCE OR A PLACE TO LIVE, THAT CAN BE ARRANGED.

YOU FREE FOR LUNCH?

I HAVE A DATE.

I NEED TO BEEF UP MY SECURITY.

TERRIFIC. I LIKE MY MEN TO HAVE SOCIAL LIVES. WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE, HEAD FOR AERODYNE PARKING. I'LL HAVE SOMEONE DROP YOU OFF WHEREVER YOU WANT.

AND TONIGHT?

WHAT ABOUT TONIGHT?

ARE YOU FREE TONIGHT?

I--

MEET ME AT THIS ADDRESS AT SEVEN. I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING. DON'T BE LATE.

ASSAN WILL ESCORT YOU.

LET'S GO, BRAFFORT.

WHAT IS THIS? WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

THE PREFECT WILL EXPLAIN IN PERSON.

THE AERODYNES ARE ON THE 50TH FLOOR. ASK FOR THE PLATFORM HEAD.

MONTMARTRE?

TONIGHT?

FANTÔMAS

COME LOOK AT THIS CURVE.

CLEO SENT IT WHILE DUROC WAS EVACUATING ME.

SEE THE SPIKE AT THE END?

RIGHT WHEN BRAFFORT STOPPED THE ANOMALY?

Alain Reynais
bientot
HAPPY DICKSON
AERODYNES CORP
NOËL J-1
LISEZ MOI
St DENIS - CENTRE
PARIS VILLE
PTE D'AUBERVILLIERS
"DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH": VIDOCQ SECURITY'S PRIVATE PRISON.
SAINT-DENIS, DISTRICT SEVEN. 12:30PM.
LA DISCIPLINE
CENTRE DE RETENTION - L'ARSI
MANON NEGRO

I CAN'T WAIT FOR YOU, PAL. YOU'LL BE OK ON YOUR OWN?

SURE.

WOULDN'T HANG AROUND HERE. SHITTY PART OF TOWN. THE PREFECT PRETTY MUCH SOLD IT ALL OFF TO PRIVATE CONTRACTORS, SO PEOPLE PUT UP A FIGHT. WENT DOWN THE TUBES FAST.

HEH. JUST LIKE OLD TIMES...

DETENTION CENTRE

PARIS

SOUS LES FLICS LA PLAGE

N'IRUE LA POLICE

ECKO

SHE'S A GOOD GIRL. I LIKE HER A LOT.

I'M GLAD SOMEONE'S COMING TO SEE HER.

2

PARLOIR

VISITEUR

durex

TALEB
114111969

VISITEURS

YOU HAVE TILL FIVE.

THANKS.

GOOD TO SEE YOU, MEL.

YOU TOO, FRANK.

DETENUS

I BROUGHT YOU SOME STUFF.

CARTON OF CIGS.

THESE ARE LIKE GOLD IN HERE.

AND, UH...

I SHOULD'VE GUESSED.

BAUDELAIRE LES FLEURS DU MAL

"THE FLOWERS OF EVIL." SEXY.

THERE'S A POEM CALLED "THE MASK" NEAR THE END. YOU SHOULD--

I DON'T WANNA READ.

BUT THE CAMERAS--

WHAT ELSE ARE VISITING ROOMS FOR? YOU SCARED OF WINDING UP ON YOUTUBE?

WHAT IF I CAN'T PERFORM? I'M LOADED ON ANTIDEPRESSANTS.

I AM AN ANTIDEPRESSANT.

HA HA HA!

VISITORS

DUMBEST THING I EVER DID.

LEAVING THE ARMY?

NO!

WAITING FOR SPILATNY TO GET BACK TO PARIS AND BREAKING HIS FACE.

RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE. HIS WIFE AND KIDS.

MY TRIAL'S IN TWO MONTHS.

DAMN.

HOW 'BOUT YOU? WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

I'LL STICK AROUND TILL YOUR TRIAL'S OVER. AFTERWARDS, WE'LL SEE.

I DID A LOT OF THINKING IN THE HOSPITAL.

I WANT TO TRY MY LUCK IN THE STATES, OR CANADA.

AMERICA, IN OTHER WORDS.

RIGHT. AMERICA.

BUT WITH EVERYTHING GOING ON HERE...

AND I SAW DUROC.

ROCKET?

HE'S WORKING FOR THE NEW PREFECT.

OH, I MEANT TO SAY. SOME GUY WAS ASKING ABOUT US.

SOME GUY?

SOMETIMES YOU GET VISITORS IN HERE. I GOT ONE. HE WAS NICE, BUT... WEIRD. LIKE HE WAS PLAYING A PART. AND HE ASKED A LOT OF QUESTIONS.

ABOUT WHAT?

CAUCASUS. THE PEACEKEEPERS.

I REMEMBER HE HAD A RING WITH THE MUNICIPAL SIGIL.

MAYBE IT WAS THE PREFECTURE CHECKING UP ON ME? THEY'VE GOT MY ARMY FILE, AND THEY HAD ME IN TO OFFER ME A JOB.

WASN'T A COP. I'M SURE OF IT.

MEL...

YOU GET TV IN HERE? FOLLOW THE NEWS?

A BIT.

BEAUREGARD

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ANOMALIES?

... SOME LOOK LIKE CLITORISES. I LIKE THOSE. OTHERWISE, THE SUBJECT DOESN'T INTEREST ME.

THANK YOU, MICHEL HOUELLEBECQ.

AND YOU, PROFESSOR? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

THE ANOMALIES ARE EVOLVING. AT FIRST, THEY WERE JUST SIMPLE ORGANISMS, LIKE FUNGAL GRAFFITI, OR MECHA-FLOWERS.

BUT THEY'VE BECOME MORE COMPLEX SINCE THEN. THEY'VE LEARNED TO USE THE CITY'S RESOURCES.

SIX MONTHS AGO, A CLOUD OF STABLE PARTICLES APPEARED. WE'VE NICKNAMED IT THE GHOSTBOARDER. BUT WITH THE HUMANOID THIS MORNING, WE'VE CLEARLY HIT A NEW PHASE.

SELF-ASSEMBLING, EVOLVING ORGANISMS... PROFESSOR, WHAT KIND OF ENERGY COULD GIVE RISE TO SUCH PHENOMENA?

NO ONE KNOWS. BUT NEED I REMIND YOU THAT THE SAME KIND OF ANOMALIES HAVE BEEN SHOWING UP IN NEW YORK, LONDON, AND TOKYO FOR DECADES NOW.

3L142.

IT'S AS IF, PAST A CERTAIN POINT, CITIES WERE BEGINNING TO SPONTANEOUSLY CREATE THINGS.

Jean Paul GAULTIER

MONTMARTRE.
DISTRICT ONE.
6:50PM.

OVER THERE, AT THE END OF THE ALLEY.

JOYEUX NOEL

THANKS.

TAXI PARISIEN

ཨོཾ་མ་ཎི་པ་དྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

EXCUSE ME, BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

SACRIFICE.

FOR THAT GOD UP THERE. I RESPECT EVERYONE'S BELIEFS.

THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOU INSIDE.

ENTRÉE INTERDITE

HELLO? ANYONE HOME?

HMM.

THERE HE IS.

HOLY SHIT...

WAIT... DON'T TELL ME.

I READ TONS OF STORIES ABOUT THIS PLACE WHEN I WAS A KID.

FANTŌMAS

WE'RE IN FANTOMA'S SECRET CAVE!

NOT JUST HIS.

SO, YOU'RE THE SOLDIER WOUNDED IN THE CAUCASUS?

SO HAPPY YOU CAME, BRAFFORT. THIS IS MY SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR AND FRIEND, CLEO VILLANOVA.

I'VE HEARD OF YOU...

I WROTE A POPULAR THESIS ON PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY.

THAT'S IT. MY SISTER HAS IT. I SAW IT THIS MORNING.

REMARKABLE COINCIDENCE.

JOEL, YOU KNOW I DON'T BELIEVE IN COINCIDENCE. TELL HIM.

MR. BRAFFORT, THIS IS MUCH MORE THAN A SUPERCRIMINAL'S CAVE. IT HAS TO DO WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU THIS MORNING AT THE PREFECTURE.

YOU MEAN THE ANOMALIES?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM?

NOT MUCH. I JUST GOT BACK TO PARIS YESTERDAY.

STOP ME IF I'M WRONG, BUT... THEY'RE ASSEMBLAGES OF OBJECTS THAT MIMIC LIFE?

MORE OR LESS. THE PRESS COVERS THE MOST REMARKABLE CASES, LIKE THE GHOSTBOARDER, BUT THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THEM. EVEN THE APS UNDERESTIMATES THEIR NUMBER.

PARIS METROPOLE

I PUT ALL OF THE ONES REPORTED FROM LAST YEAR ON THIS MAP.

YOU SEEM TROUBLED.

I...

IT'S NOTHING.

THE SPIRAL STARTS IN MONTMARTRE. FROM THIS BUILDING, I GUESS?

EXACTLY.

CLEO WAS TRYING TO LOCATE THE SOURCE, AND FINALLY FOUND IT HERE. SINCE IT'S AN ANNEX OF THE OLD SEINE PREFECTURE, I REQUESTED IT FOR STUDY.

THAT'S HOW WE FOUND THE ELEVATOR AND THIS CELLAR.

SO FANTOMA WAS A COP?

NO. HE VANISHED IN 1925. SOMEONE ELSE MOVED IN AFTER HIM AND STAYED 'TIL AT LEAST 1940.

SHOW HIM, ASSAN.

SINCE NO ONE KNOWS HIS NAME, WE CALL HIM "THE MASKED MAN."

THIS IS CRAZY...

DON'T WORRY, THE FLAG'S A TROPHY.

WHEN PARIS WAS LIBERATED, DE GAULLE ENTRUSTED THIS FILE TO THE PREFECT OF THE SEINE, BUT THE ARCHIVES VANISHED DURING THE 1967 ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT WENT ON HERE.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT, THIS IS JUST ABANDONED PROPERTY.

SO WHERE DO THE ANOMALIES FIT IN?

OR ME, FOR THAT MATTER?

STAY WHERE YOU ARE, BRAFFORT.

WHAT?

NOW HOLD ON JUST A SEC--

YOU CHICKENING OUT? DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE?

THIS IS WHERE IT BEGINS.

NO MATTER WHAT, STAY CALM! THIS IS AN EXPERIMENT.

THIS CAVE IS THE SOURCE OF THE ANOMALIES. I'M ALWAYS MONITORING IT.

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS BULLSHIT?

WHEN YOU INTERVENED AT THE PREFECTURE THIS MORNING, ENERGY LEVELS WENT THROUGH THE ROOF.

THIS FORCE WANTS SOMETHING FROM YOU.

WE'RE GOOD, MA'AM.

HE GETS IT.

"BUT NO! 'TIS BUT A MASK...

FOOLING US ...

WITH THAT EXQUISITE GRIMACE."

"ON THE REVERSE YOU SEE HER PROPER FACE,

FIERCELY CONVULSED, IN ITS TRUE SELF REVEALED,

WHICH FROM OUR SIGHT THAT LYING MASK CONCEALED."

BRAFFORT?

DREE-EEN-LUNA!

EXCELLENT.

... WE'VE GOTTEN USED TO THESE SPECTACULAR PHENOMENA...

OH, NO! NOT NOW!

BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THEY'VE BEEN SEEN ON SUCH A SCALE.

HUGO, LOOK!

WHAT THE--?

IS THIS SOME NEW KIND OF ANOMALY, OR SOMETHING ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT? STAY TUNED TO THE LIGHTNING NETWORK!

MONTMARTRE'S ON FIRE!

THIS MORNING...

STRANGE SKIES...

HNNGH.

THE PHENOMENON STOPPED SHORTLY AFTER 6 A.M...

THE GLOWING CLOUD SEEMS TO HAVE BROKEN UP, BUT THE PREFECTURE ADVISES PARISIANS TO STAY INDOORS IF POSSIBLE.

USA: PRESIDENT OBAMA CANCELS ANNUAL OFFICIAL VISIT TO MOSCOW (REUTERS)

ADVICE FEW PEOPLE ARE LIKELY TO FOLLOW, AS IT IS CHRISTMAS.

HNNGH.

BHL SAYS HE'S GOING TO GEORGIA AND ARME TO SPEAK WITH REBELS

THE PREFECT HAS ANNOUNCED SCIENTIFIC MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN AT MEUDON OBSERVATORY. A LARGE CROWD IS GATHERING THERE AS I SPEAK.

HEY!

SPORT: MONA BAKÉ CROSSES ROUEN 5 HOURS LATE, SPRAINS WRIST (AFP)

WE HAVE AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH –

OH. PARDON ME.

ASSAN! I THINK HE'S WAKING UP!

MOVIES: LUC BESSON CONFIRMS PREPRODUCTION ON BLAKE & MORTIMER (SOURCE EUROPACORP)

...THE PREFECT HAS JUST NOW ARRIVED IN MEUDON AND IS ABOUT TO SPEAK...

ABOUT TIME.

DON'T RUSH HIM.

STARK INDUSTRIES FOR 2 YEARS (NAS

LET'S GO LIVE TO OUR REPORTER, ZOE KADER.

HE'S A SOLIDER. HE'S BEEN WOUNDED BEFORE.

ZOE, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

BRAFFORT, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

HNNGH...

POLICE

YES, MONA.
AS YOU CAN SEE, THERE'S A HUGE CROWD HERE, BUT THE PREFECT'S SECURITY WON'T LET US THROUGH.
I'LL TRY TO GET CLOSER...

AIR METRO

02/44

PARITROPOLIS.
DISTRICT 4.
MEUDON HILL.

24 DECEMBER.
1:30PM.

EXCUSE ME.

'SCUSE ME.

PARIS LOVES YOU, BEAUREGARD!

STEP BACK.

I'M A REPORTER!

DON'T YOU GET IT, SHITHEAD? BEAUREGARD'S A FASCIST!

IT IS JUST UTTER CHAOS DOWN HERE.

WHO ARE YOU CALLING A SHITHEAD?

MONA, I–

I HOPE YOU'RE GETTING THESE IMAGES.

I SAID STEP BACK!

RAPHAELLE! IT'S NO USE! NO ONE'S GETTING THROUGH.

I HAVE TO TALK TO THE PREFECT!

BUT... WHY?

MY BROTHER WENT TO SEE HIM ABOUT A JOB YESTERDAY, AND I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HIM SINCE. HIS PHONE'S OFF. I'M WORRIED.

IT'S REALLY NOT A GOOD TIME.

WHOA!

CITIZENS!

POLICE

adidas

BEAUREGARD, YOU'RE THE BEST!

SHUT UP! THIS CITY'S UNLIVABLE NOW, THANKS TO HIM!

AROUND EIGHT O'CLOCK LAST NIGHT, A HOMEMADE BOMB DAMAGED A MUNICIPAL HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTOR IN MONTMARTRE, DISTRICT 1.

THE HOLOGRAM REMAINED STABLE, BUT SEVERAL GAS MAINS EXPLODED, RESULTING IN A MASSIVE LEAK THAT LATER IGNITED.

GAS?

NO WAY...

I'VE ASKED ENGINEERS FROM METRO AIR TO TAKE SAMPLES AT ALTITUDE. ION A FEW MINUTES, THEY'LL BE TAKING OFF WITH ONE OF MY MEN ONBOARD TO ENSURE THEIR SAFETY.

HUGO!

THAT GUY SUITING UP OVER THERE! I KNOW HIM! HE'S THE ONE WHO TOOK MY BROTHER TO THE PREFECTURE! HIS NAME'S ROCKET.

WHAT?

C'MON!

IF METRO AIR DETECTS ANY HEALTH HAZARD, MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN.

WHAT ABOUT THE BOMBER? WHO WAS IT?

SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T LIKE MASKS?

UH OH!

MAYOR CAPRICE.

AND COMMISSIONER REINES.

HELLO, MICHELLE.

YOUR SLEAZY CHARM WON'T WORK ON ME, PREFECT.

A WORD IN PRIVATE, PLEASE.

THERE YOU HAVE IT, MAIA. DISTRICT 1 MAYOR MICHELLE CAPRICE IS HAVING A PRIVATE WORD WITH PREFECT BEAUREGARD ABOUT HEALTH HAZARDS.

BUT IT'S HARD TO FORGET THAT CAPRICE ALSO HEADS UP THE INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE THAT WILL REPORT IN JANUARY ON THE PREFECT'S ACTIONS AS HEAD OF PARITROPOLIS.

A REPORT THAT THREATENS TO BE HARSH.

CIALIZED EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT THE BRITISH PM (AFP)

THE WEATHER BALLOON SHOULD BE TAKING OFF ANY MINUTE NOW...

I'LL KEEP YOU UPDATED.

THANKS, ZOE.

ELYSEE: THE PRESIDENT AFFIRMS THAT APPOINTING A SPECIAL PREFECT FOR PARITROPOLIS WAS "ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY" (PRESS RELEASE)

THIS HAS BEEN YOUR EYE ON THE CITY, MONA BACCAY...

HNNGH.

I FEEL TERRIBLE.

YOU'LL BE FINE, BRAFFORT.

YOU WERE OUT FOR SEVENTEEN HOURS. HAVE SOME WATER. I'LL FIND YOU SOMETHING TO EAT.

I SAW YOUR ARMY FILE. SAYS YOU WERE DIAGNOSED WITH P.T.S.D.?

YOU TAKING ANYTHING?

YEAH. TONS OF SIDE EFFECTS.

TREMBLING, MUSCLE SPASMS.

WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO ME LAST NIGHT?

SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY.

I'M NO ARCHAEOLOGIST, MA'AM, BUT...

I KNOW. THIS CAVE IS AN ANOMALY IN AND OF ITSELF

THE CARVINGS DOWN THERE DATE BACK TO THE STONE AGE.

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN USING THIS CAVE SINCE BEFORE HISTORY, ALL THE WAY UP TO WORLD WAR TWO. FANTOMA AND THE COSTUMED MAN WERE THE LAST.

SO, THAT STUFF ON TV ABOUT A BOMB...

THE PRESS HAD TO BE TOLD SOMETHING. WHAT WITH YESTERDAY'S RIOTS, THE BOSS FIGURED THEY'D BUY A TERRORIST ATTACK.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IS SOMETHING ELSE.

I VAGUELY REMEMBER A LUMINOUS SHAPE...

LOOK.

THESE ARE THE ENERGY READINGS WE USUALLY GET FROM THE CAVE. THEY'RE ROUGHLY THE SAME AS THOSE GENERATED BY YOUR AVERAGE ANOMALY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THINGS LIKE THE GHOSTBOARDER.

NOW, THAT WAS YOU AT THE PREFECTURE YESTERDAY MORNING.

ALREADY WAY ABOVE AVERAGE.

AND THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED HERE LAST NIGHT WHEN YOU WENT DOWN THERE.

FOR A MINUTE, YOU MANAGED TO CONDENSE ALL AVAILABLE ENERGY.

YOU REACHED OPTIMAL LEVELS.

WHAT?

BRAFFORT, I KNOW YOU'RE ON DRUGS, BUT TRY TO KEEP UP, ALL RIGHT?

SETTLE DOWN.

CONCENTRATE, FRANK. WHAT'S THE LAST THING YOU REMEMBER?

I GOT TO ST-DENIS LATE AFTERNOON... I THOUGHT THE PREFECT AND THE COLONEL WANTED TO TALK TO ME ABOUT A JOB.

IT WAS AN EXCUSE TO MEASURE YOUR INFLUENCE ON THE ANOMALIES.

THEN EVERYTHING GETS BLURRY. THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION OF LIGHT, THEN THAT SHAPE, AND IT'S WEIRD, BUT I...

I FEEL LIKE IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THERE.

IT WAS ALREADY THERE IN THE CAUCASUS, ON ROUTE 41.

WHAT SHAPE?

SHHH...

HIDDEN BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THINGS.

BUT I COULD SEE IT.

RATHER, I COULD SENSE IT.

AS IF...

HNGH...

I WERE RECOVERING...

...A BURIED MEMORY.

ROCKET!

HEY, ROCKET!

OVER HERE!

AIR ME

WELL, WELL! RAPHAELLE!

FANCY SEEING YOU HERE, HOTTIE!

WHERE'S FRANK? I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HIM SINCE MIDDAY YESTERDAY. I'M STARTING TO WORRY.

A PRETTY-BOY. COOL.

DUROC. V.

MEANS US REAL MEN STILL HAVE A SHOT.

AND WHO'S THIS?

HUGO DELAMBRE. MY BOYFRIEND.

LISTEN, YOU DIRTY-

WANNA DANCE?

WHAT IS ***WRONG*** WITH YOU?

YOUR BIG BRO LEFT THE PREFECTURE JUST BEFORE NOON YESTERDAY.

HE MET WITH BEAUREGARD. THEN A DRIVER TOOK HIM TO ST.DENIS. THAT'S ALL I KNOW.

ST.DENIS?

WELL, GOTTA RUN.

HOW 'BOUT A KISS IN THANKS?

NO! GOD!

FOR LUCK, THEN?

I'M RISKING MY LIFE UP THERE.

NO WAY.

HEH. JUST LIKE YOUR BROTHER. SO UPTIGHT.

SEE YA LATER!

WHERE'S THAT NUTCASE FROM?

DON'T MAKE A BIG THING OF IT, HUGO. HE'S JUST ANOTHER FUCKED-UP VET.

ANOTHER TIME AND PLACE, I MIGHT HAVE KISSED HIM.

AIRMÉTRO

AIRMÉTRO

AND THEY'RE OFF.

YES.

BUT WILL THEY ACTUALLY FIND ANY TRACES OF GAS? THAT IS THE QUESTION.

OH, REALLY?

I DON'T BUY YOUR TERRORIST STORY. NEITHER DOES COMMISSIONER REINES.

OH NO?

ALL WE HAVE IS YOUR VERSION OF EVENTS. IF YOU'RE INVOLVED, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER--

WHERE DID YOU GET THAT IDEA?

YOUR HANDS. THE BURNS.

BANDAGED. AND THERE'S A SMUDGE OF BURN CREAM ON YOUR RIGHT GLOVE.

YOU SHOULD COME WORK FOR ME, REINES.

I'M A COP. NOT A YES-MAN.

HEY!

SOMETHING'S GOING ON UP THERE.

GOOD GOD, BRAFFORT!

YOU DID IT AGAIN!

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

FAR, FAR AWAY...

CAN YOU OPEN YOUR EYES?

I DON'T KNOW.

THAT SHAPE I WAS TALKING ABOUT...

IF I PICTURE IT, IT WORKS ON ME. IF I LOSE IT...

HMM...

YOU'RE USING A PSYCHOACTIVE SYMBOL TO RETURN TO LAST NIGHT'S STATE. REMARKABLE.

TRY LOOKING AT ME.

WE'RE GOOD. HE'S STABLE.

IS THIS WHAT HAPPENED TO ME IN THE CAVE?

FOR TEN SECONDS. THE DIFFERENCE IS, YOUR EYES WERE WHITE.

I FEEL LIKE I'M HANDLING A PUPPET.

I ASSURE YOU, THIS IS A FULLY FUNCTIONAL MALE BODY.

YOU NEED PANTS.

MIGHT I SUGGEST...?

ASSAN, THAT SUIT'S WAY TOO SMALL.

WAIT.

DID YOU-

DID YOU DO THAT JUST BY THINKING ABOUT IT?

FANTOM

I DON'T KNOW HOW I DID IT.

YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE EXPLANATIONS.

PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY ISN'T REALLY A SCIENCE.

BULLSHIT.

I MAY BE AN UNEMPLOYED EX-SERGEANT, BUT I'M NOT STUPID.

YOU AND BEAUREGARD FOUND THIS PLACE AND SET UP THE FANTOMA HOLOGRAM. WHY DID YOU DRAG ME HERE?

A NOBODY LIKE ME? JUST TO WEAR A COSTUME?

SO WHAT IF WE DID?

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND.

NO ONE HAS FORCED YOU INTO THIS, FRANK. YOU COULD'VE WALKED AWAY AT ANY TIME.

BESIDES, I DIDN'T CHOOSE YOU. YOU--

HEY, YOU TWO!

WHEN YOU'RE DONE YELLING, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT THE NEWS.

SOMETHING'S GOING DOWN IN MEUDON.

... TO PERCY HOSPITAL IN CRITICAL CONDITION.

THANK YOU, ZOE.

FOR THOSE OF YOU JUST TUNING IN, BREAKING NEWS: ONE OF THE TWO METRO AIR ENGINEERS JUST FELL FROM THE WEATHER BALLOON THAT WAS LAUNCHED THIS AFTERNOON.

THANKS TO THE LIGHTNING NETWORK'S SELF-GUIDED CAMERAS, WE BRING YOU THESE OPEN-ACCESS IMAGES. THEY WERE SHOT FIVE MINUTES AGO AS THE BALLOON REACHED 1000 FEET.

HERE THE TWO SCIENTISTS CAN BE SEEN ADJUSTING THEIR INSTRUMENTS.

TEMPERATURE'S STILL RISING. THAT'S WEIRD, ISN'T IT?

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GONDOLA IS THE MISSION'S SECURITY OFFICER.

FUCKING WOMEN!

FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON, THIS OFFICER LOST HIS GRIP AND REMOVED HIS HELMENT.

COLONEL!

I SAW. IT'S DUROC.

THE INVERSION LAYER'S BEEN STABLE FOR TWO DAYS NOW. INSTEAD OF MOLECULAR CONCENTRATIONS, ALL I'M FINDING ARE THE USUAL POLLUTANTS.

OH, SHUT UP!

CAN'T YOU WORK QUIETLY?

I'LL FIND OUT IF THERE'S ANY GAS AROUND HERE!

HEY!

NO! IT'S DANGEROUS!

THE METRO AIR ENGINEERS FELL A MINUTE AFTER THE NETWORK INEXPLICABLY WENT DOWN. THE TEAM ON THE GROUND STARTED TOWING IN THE BALLOON, WHICH SHOULD BE ON THE GROUND SHORTLY.

ZOE, CAN YOU CONFIRM?

THE BALLOON IS ABOUT TO LAND, MONA. EVERYONE IS WAITING TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER TWO PASSENGERS.

PREMIERS SECOUR

SAPEURS-POM

DE PARIS

AIR MÉTRO

BEAUREGARD! YOUR MAN--

YOU TWO! GO CHECK IT OUT.

HEY, DUROC, OLD BUDDY.

I'VE GOT THE GIRL.

IT'S OVER NOW. WE'RE HERE.

HERE.

LET ME HELP YOU-

DUROC?

DUROC, V.

2014

THAT WAS MY NAME WHEN I WAS MEAT!

NOW, I'M THE *ROCKET!*

OH...
OH NO.
RELAX!
CALM DOWN!
IT'S THIS THING I DO WITH THE GIRLS!
REINES, WHAT THE HELL IS THAT MONSTROSITY?
I'VE GOT NO IDEA, MAYOR.
LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS IF I--
RRRRAHTATHTAT

VIOLENT MEN... AND AT CHRISTMAS, TOO...

YOU MAKE ME WANT TO VOMIT.

KOFF...

CAN'T... BREATHE...

EVACUATE THE MAYOR IMMEDIATELY!

SOMEONE MADE ME ANGRY! BUT WHO?

MY HEAD'S ALL FOGGY...

BEAUREGARD, SPILL.

WHAT WAS THAT GAS LAST NIGHT?

IF I KNEW, I WOULDN'T HAVE CALLED METRO AIR.

SOMETHING CAPABLE OF TURNING A MAN INTO A LIVING CLOUD? THAT'S APS BUSINESS.

YOU!

I KNOW YOU! YOU WERE MEAN TO ME!

HUGO!

KOFF!

HELP!

LET'S GO FOR A RIDE.

ROCKET! NO!

OH, YES! YOU'LL SEE!

I KNOW A PLACE IN DISTRICT 10.

OUT IN THE WOODS. WE'LL BE ALL ALONE.

THEY'RE HEADING NORTH UP THE SEINE.

WE CAN INTERCEPT THEM OVER GENNEVILLIERS.

THAT IS, IF THE PREFECT LOANS US A FEW AERODYNES.

THE REST OF YOU! THIS WAY!

WAIT! I'M COMING TOO.

POLICE 006

DREAM ON, MY BOY.

THE ROCKET KIDNAPPED MY GIRLFRIEND!

A PARISIAN ROMANCE?

I'M GAME.

COMMISSIONER, CITY HALL JUST CALLED. THE MAYOR'S SAFE AND SOUND.

DOUBLE THE SECURITY. I'LL JOIN HER LATER.

GOOD NEWS.

DON'T TRY AND COZY UP TO ME, BEAUREGARD. ALL THIS IS YOUR DOING.

MONA, I...

KOFF! I'M BACK ON...

...AFTER THIS INCREDIBLE SCENE. THE GAS IS JUST BEGINNING TO DISSIPATE SO I DON'T THINK YOU SAW MUCH...

WE WITNESSED THE TRANFORMATION OF OFFICER DUROC LIVE...

TELE 1

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT WASN'T CLEAR. DID YOU SEE THE WOMAN GET KIDNAPPED?

I WAS TOO FAR AWAY, BUT LIGHTNING NETWORK CAMERAS ARE FOLLOWING DUROC AND HIS CAPTIVE OVER THE SEINE.

PARIS: FORMER MAYOR B. DELANOË ASSURES MAYOR CAPRICE OF "HIS SYMPATHIES" (AFP)

TELE 1

AH, YES. WE'RE GETTING THOSE NOW.

VICTOR! PUT ME DOWN!

FINANCE: CAC 40 -2.35%, INVESTORS WORRIED.

THERE IS NO MORE VICTOR. ONLY THE ROCKET.

RAPHAELLE?

WHAT DID YOU--

--SAY, FRANK?

HOW AM I DOING THIS?

STOP WRIGGLING AROUND! YOU'RE THROWING ME OFF!

YOU PSYCHO!

WHAT?

AAAAAH!

RELAX.

NEW GENNEVILLIERS MARINA

DISTRICT 6. 3:50PM.

LET ME SETTLE THIS AND I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU.

VICTOR...

I KNOW YOU?

LET ME GIVE YOU A HUG.

IT'S ALL HAPPENING WITHOUT ME.

AS IF I WERE WATCHING MYSELF FIGHT REMOTELY.

HELP!

I THINK, AND THE PUPPET OBEYS.

I LOVE IT.

HOLD ON, MISS! WE'RE COMING.

I'M FREEZING!

YOU'VE GOT A SICKLY AIR ALL OF A SUDDEN.

YOU BOTTOMING OUT?

WHOA!

THERE'S TWO OF THEM NOW?

WHO'S THE MAN IN BLACK AND WHITE?

HOW WOULD I KNOW?

A SICKLY AIR?

RUNNING...
OUT OF AIR.

OK.

WHERE'S MY GAL?

OH MY GOD!

ANYONE SEE HER? WE WERE HAVING WORDS.

I WANT LOVE!

HE'S HEADING FOR THE DOCKS!

ANYTHING BROKEN?

ALL GOOD.

AND THE OTHER GUY?

NO SIGN.

BETWEEN THE PORT WORKERS AND THE RESIDENTS, THE ROCKET COULD KILL A LOT OF PEOPLE. BETTER GET TO SAFETY.

OK.

GET UP, MR. BRAFFORT.

WE'RE SHORT ON TIME AND SO ARE YOU.

YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

WE KNOW MANY THINGS ABOUT PARIS.

WE KNOW THAT AN EVENT HAS BEEN BREWING FOR MONTHS NOW.

A MAJOR PHENOMENON, INVOLVING A VETERAN OF THE CAUCASUS.

THOSE RINGS!

WE ARE *THE NALITONII*.

YOU'RE THE ONES WHO WENT TO SEE MEL TALEB UP IN JAIL...

NO TIME FOR THAT NOW.

YOU MUST BE BACK OUTSIDE ALREADY, TAKING CARE OF THE ROCKET.

IF I KNEW HOW--

THE MARINA IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. THERE IS HEAVY DIVING EQUIPMENT ALL AROUND.

WE CAME TO WARN YOU.

FROM NOW ON, ALL PARIS WILL WANT TO TRY AND USE YOU.

CAPRICE, TO DISCREDIT THE PREFECT.

THE PREFECT, BECAUSE HE NEEDS ALLIES.

EVEN COLONEL ASSAN HAS A SECRET AGENDA. WHEN HE WAS POSTED TO WASHINGTON, HE SAW HOW THE AMERICANS USED THEIR OWN ANOMALIES.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

MASKS. CAPES.

ASSAN IS A PATRIOT. HE WANTS THE SAME THING FOR FRANCE.

BUT MOST DANGEROUS OF ALL IS CLEO VILLANOVA.

SHE ACTS LIKE SHE'S DISCOVERED A NEW SOURCE OF ENERGY.

SO?

HAVE YOU SEEN THE GRAVEN ROCKS AND CAVE TEMPLE LET OFF THE SLIGHTEST WATT OR VOLT? VILLANOVA'S PLAYING WITH FORCES BEYOND HER KEN.

THAT THING BENEATH MONTMARTRE HAS SLUMBERED FOR ALMOST A CENTURY, BUT YOU HAVE WOKEN IT, AND NOW IT HAS SPREAD ALL OVER PARIS. IT CREATED THE ROCKET.

IT'S NOT MY FAULT!

VILLANOVA KNOWS EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ON THE SUBJECT, BUT SHE'S CHOSEN TO IGNORE IT. SHE'S COMPLETELY IRRESPONSIBLE.

NEXT TIME YOU SEE HER, ASK HER TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE PLASM.

DON'T FORGET.

THE PLASM.

MAYBE I'M STILL IN THE PSYCH WARD?

POLICE

OUR WEAPONS ARE USELESS. I'M EVACUATING THE MARINA.

WE'LL TOUCH BASE TONIGHT.

LOOK!

WHO IS THAT GUY?

AND WHAT'S HE DOING? LOOKS LIKE HE'S DRAGGING A–

WHERE'S MY MEGAPHONE?

DUROC!

VICTOR DUROC!

THIS IS PREFECT BEAUREGARD!

HOW MANY DISTRICTS DO I HAVE TO GAS BEFORE YOU START SAYING MY NAME RIGHT?

DUROC... ROCKET... WHATEVER.

YOU USED TO WORK FOR ME. YOU KNOW I HAVE A LOT OF POWER IN PARIS.

I'LL GIVE YOU THE GIRL IF YOU SETTLE DOWN.

HEY!

WHAT THE HELL?

DON'T WORRY, HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING.

PLAY IT SMART, VICTOR.

BEAUREGARD HAS NO POWER OVER ME.

AND ANYWAY, I HATE YOU.

EVEN AS GAS, YOU SUCK.

OK, PREFECT.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS–

HEY!

NO!

WELDERS!

A DIVING BELL? I CALL FOUL!

YOU ASKED FOR IT.

I WOULDN'T USE THAT TONE IF I WERE YOU.

TAKE OFF THAT MASK AND STEP DOWN.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR--

AH, FUDGE.

THAT GUY'S AS BIG A MONSTER AS I AM. WHY DON'T YOU GO AFTER HIM?

COME ON, REINES...

WHO SAYS "FUDGE" ANY MORE?

I CAN'T KEEP GOING LIKE THIS.

I NEED--

THE PUPPET HAS TO GO.

PUT IT BACK THE WAY IT WAS.

ASCENSEUR

HURRK!

PLASM.

CAVE.

CAPE.

DAMMIT, CLEO!

I WAS JUST LOOKING FOR A JOB.

PREFECT!
COMMISSIONER!
A FEW QUESTIONS, IF YOU DON'T MIND?
POLICE
I WANT A LAWYER!

THIS IS WHERE WE PART WAYS, REINES.
TOO BAD. I LIKED WORKING WITH YOU.
OH, WE'LL MEET AGAIN.
YOU SCORED SOME POINTS, TAKING CARE OF THE ROCKET, BUT OTHER STUFF'LL COME UP.
I WOULDN'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE IF I WERE YOU.
AT LEAST I KEEP THINGS INTERESTING.

UN HOMME PRESSÉ
Le Monde
TERREUR À MELUN
...NO LINK HAS BEEN FOUND BETWEEN THE VENTS IN MONTMARTRE, THE TRANSFORMATION OF VICTOR DUROC, AND THE MASKED MAN IN GENNEVILLIERS.
MONA IS BACK

PSG
DISTRICT 1 MAYOR MICHELLE CAPRICE RESPONDED IMMEDIATELY:
"I'M NOT MAKING ANY ACCUSATIONS. LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, I'M SIMPLY NOTICING COINCIDENCES."
"SURELY THE FANTOMA HOLOGRAM IS NOT TO BLAME FOR THE EVENTS OF THESE LAST TWO DAYS, BUT IT'S A PERFECT SYMBOL."
CALLING
RAPH
16 Messages
"AFTER 5 YEARS OF DELIBERATELY AMERICANIZING OUR POLICIES, PREFECT BEAUREGARD HAS GOTTEN WHAT HE ALWAYS WANTED: A CITY IN CHAOS."

RAPH?

IT'S ASSAN.

I'VE GOT YOUR JACKET AND BACKPACK. I'M STILL WITH CLEO. WE'RE HEADED FOR THE PREFECTURE.

BOSS WANTS TO PREPARE A STATEMENT ON WHAT HAPPENED IN GENNEVILLIERS.

YOU HAVE TO COME OVER.

NEGATIVE.

I'M EXHAUSTED. AND NAUSEOUS. I SKIPPED A PILL, AND I MIGHT GET FINED FOR HOPPING THE METRO WITHOUT A TICKET. WANT SOME MORE REASONS?

CALM DOWN.

SO, YOU NEED SOME TIME ALONE TO THINK THINGS THROUGH. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT?

I SAW YOU OUT THERE, ON TV...

WHAT YOU DID WAS AMAZING.

I DON'T GIVE A SHIT!

UH- SORRY.

DON'T WORRY, YOUNG MAN.

IT'S CHRISTMAS. ALL IS FORGIVEN.

...THE COMMITTEE IS DUE TO MAKE ITS REPORT IN EARLY JANUARY, BUT WE CAN NO LONGER WAIT.

THAT'S WHY I'VE ASKED THE PRESIDENT TO PERSONALLY INTERVENE. THE POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY IS HIS, ABOVE ALL.

OOF...

FRANK!?

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

I LEFT YOU TONS OF MESSAGES!

I KNOW.

YESTERDAY, AFTER MY MEETING AT THE PREFECTURE, I WENT TO ST.DENIS, BUT I... I HAD AN ATTACK.

SO, YOU HAVEN'T HEARD?

ABOUT WHAT?

ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED IN MEUDON!

I JUST GOT BACK, BUT I WAS THERE! SO WAS YOUR BUDDY, DUROC.

HE GOT TRANSFORMED!

REALLY?

I SWEAR! HE GOT ALL — I DON'T KNOW — *GASEOUS!* HE TRIED TO KIDNAP ME, BUT THIS OTHER GUY CAUGHT HIM OVER THE SEINE AND I--

M...

WHAT?

MOM?

DAD?

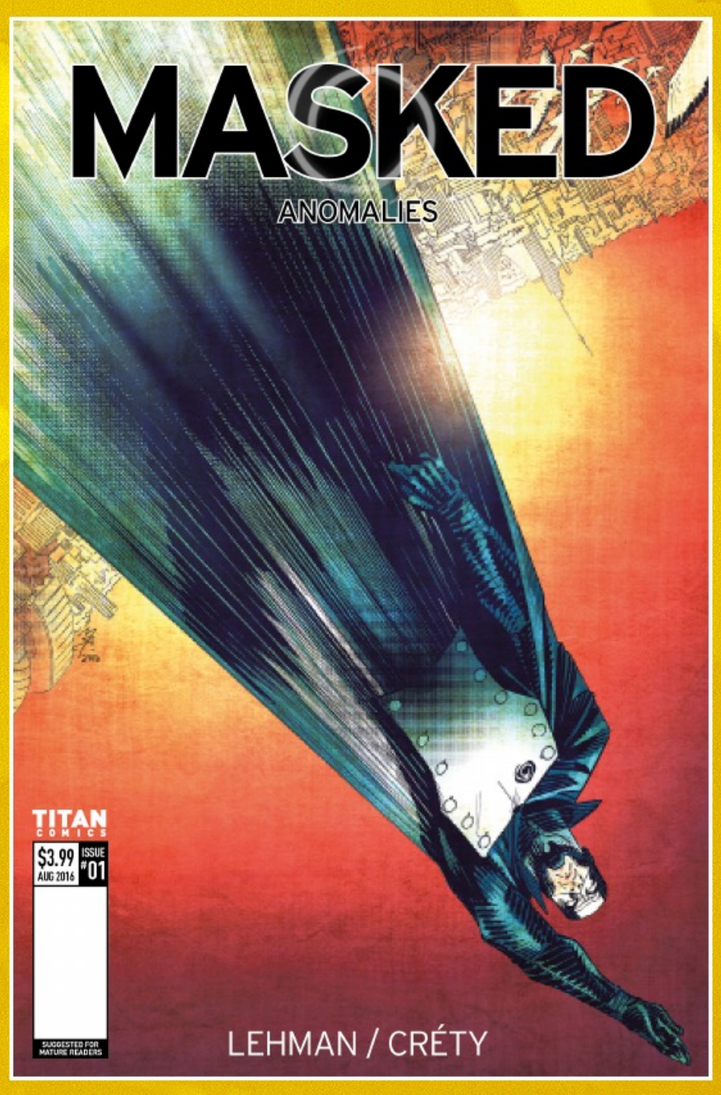
IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE WE HAD CHRISTMAS AS A FAMILY!

MERRY CHRISTMAS, DARLINGS!

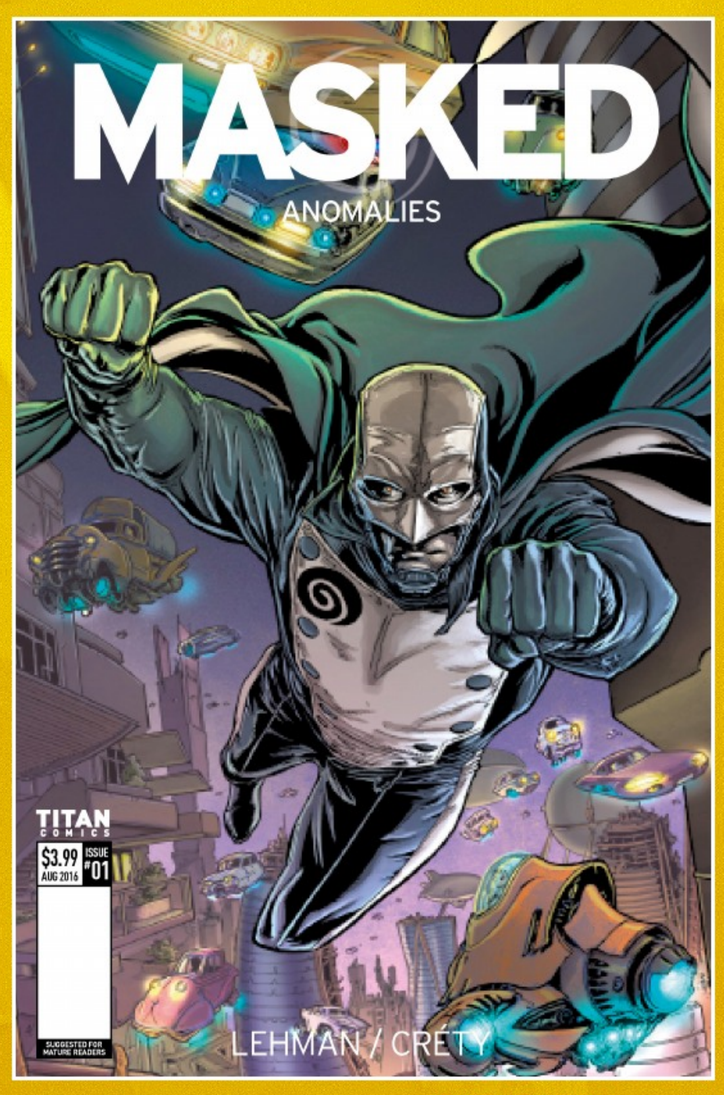
THE END... FOR NOW!

MASKED

COVER GALLERY

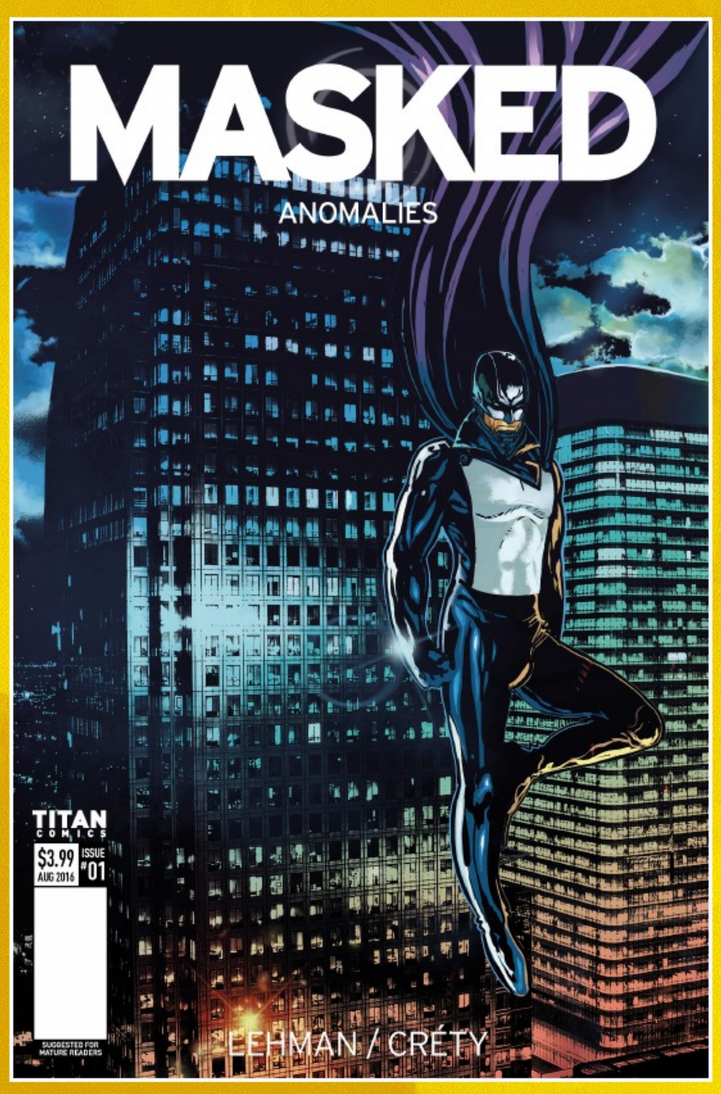


ISSUE1 COVER A **JOHN MCCREA**



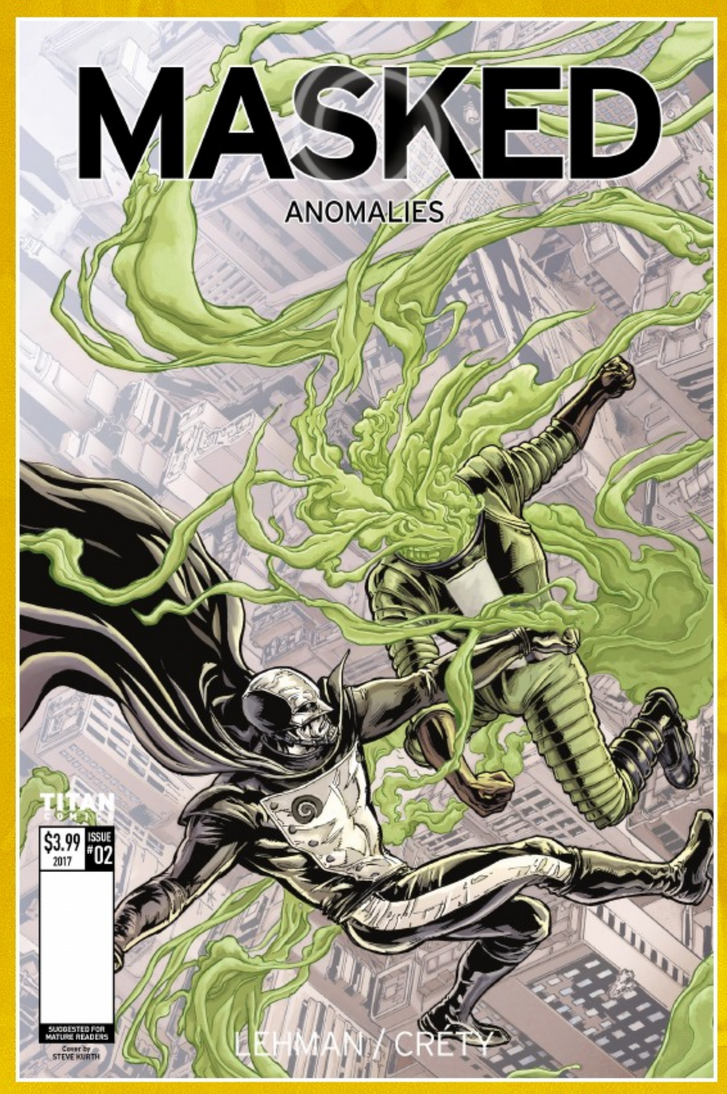
ISSUE1 COVER C **STEVE KURTH**

ISSUE1 COVER B **BENJAMIN CARRÉ**

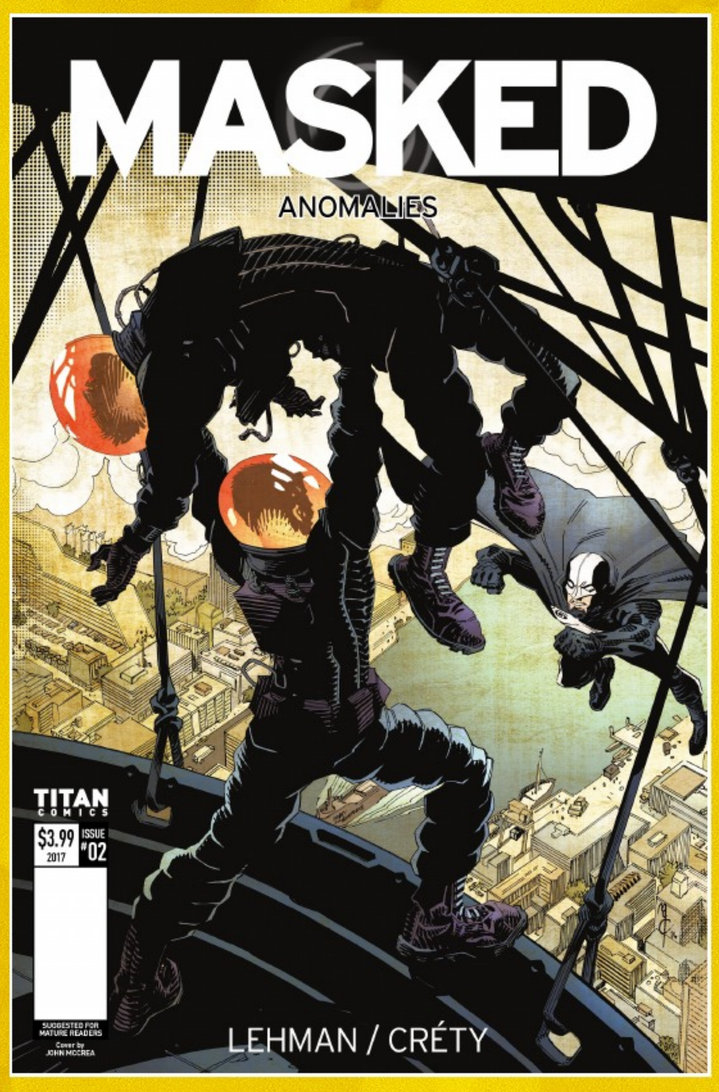


ISSUE1 COVER D **STÉPHANE CRÉTY**

ISSUE1 COVER E **STÉPHANE PERGER**



ISSUE2 COVER A **STEVE KURTH**



ISSUE2 COVER B JOHN MCCREA

ISSUE2 COVER C NICK PERCIVAL

ISSUE2 COVER D JULIEN HUGONNARD-BERT

ISSUE3 COVER A JOHN MCCREA

ISSUE3 COVER B STÉPHANE CRÉTY

ISSUE3 COVER C JULIEN HUGONNARD-BERT

ISSUE4 COVER A JOHN MCCREA & MIKE SPICER

ISSUE4 COVER B STÉPHANE PERGER

ISSUE4 COVER C JULIEN HUGONNARD-BERT

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CREATOR BIOS

Serge Lehman is a Science-Fiction writer and the winner of the Prix Rosny-Aîné for his novel *F.A.U.S.T.* He is also the author of several comic book series, such as *The Chimera Brigade* (also published by Titan Comics).

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Gaétan Georges is a digital artist, colorist and designer working in comics, board games and video games. He has colored several comics, including such titles as *Bad Ass* and *Rock and Stone*.

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